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ABSTRACT

A survey was conducted at Michigan State University to examine the nature (positive or negative) and levels (high, medium, or low) of the perceptions and attitudes of students from 29 developing countries--in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean--toward the use of educational media in their homelands. Two hundred and eight out of 350 questionnaires were returned by 39 undergraduate and 169 graduate students (62% response rate). Percentages, means, and analysis of variance were used to analyze data frequencies, and major findings indicated that the general attitudes of the respondents toward the use of educational media were positive in nature and were expressed at a high level. Positive perceptions were also indicated toward the use of educational media in business and industry, followed by government and education. Some variations in attitudes were observed in respondents' general perceptions of levels of their annual per capita incomes, and in specific perceptions of education, business and industry, and government. No significant differences were noted in terms of levels of academic programs, experience, and information. A number of minor findings were noted in regard to students' levels of experience with and simple knowledge of educational media and levels of their annual per capita incomes. The overall conclusion was that this highly favorable perception may be due to respondents' experience with and information about media. However, the findings should not be generalized because of the limited scope and coverage of the study. (5 references) (CGD)

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Perceptions of International Students Toward the use of Educational Media in Their Home Countries

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PERCEPTIONS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS TOWARD THE USE OF EDUCATIONAL MEDIA IN THEIR HOME COUNTRIES

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of international students toward the use of educational media in their home countries.

Every year thousands of international students come to the United States for higher education and advanced training. The majority of these students, upon their return, are expected to hold leadership positions in education, business & industry, and government. As leaders they are expected to play the roles of planners, advisors, decision makers, change agents, and administrators. Also these people are likely to be involved in the process of transfer of technology, or adoption-diffusion process of innovations in their home countries.

Claudine Michel (1987) has also highlighted the importance of international students in the process of transfer of technology or adoption-diffusion process of innovations in their home countries. There are three groups of people involved in such processes. The First group includes members of a foreign nation like educators and business representatives who try to convince the decision-makers of a country to adopt the new technology. The Second group comprises those individuals in a country who are assigned the task of solving educational problems. The third group is the well familiar group of international students in various U.S. colleges and universities. It is the members of the third group that comes into short or long-term contact with the most recent educational media when they enter European of American universities. In some cases they become not only acquainted with the new educational media, but also adequately experienced in using some of them. When these international students return home, they take with them not only their increeased knowledge, skills, and experience, but also their perceptions and attitudes toward educational media. They go home to assume positions in teaching, government, educational administration, and business & industry.

Rogers and Shoemakers (1971) have listed a large number of studies indicating that favorable perceptions are positively related with adoption-diffusion of innovations. Therefore, the perception of international students toward the use of educational media in their home countries is one of the critical factors that needs to be considered by those interested in introducing new educational technology, or in expansion of markets for various educational media in developing countries.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the foregoing facts, this study was designed to answer

the following questions:

(1) What is the nature (positive or negative) of international students' general perception toward the use of educational media in their home countries?

(2) What is the level of international students' general perception toward the use of educational media in their home countries ?

(3) What is the level of international students' perceptions toward the use of educational media in relation to educational institutions, business & industry, and government ?

(4) Do the general as well as specific perceptions of international students toward the use of educational media vary in terms of levels of their academic programs, experience with media, information about media, and annual per capita incomes ?

DEFINITIONS AND DESCRIPTIONS OF TERMS

For clarity and better understanding, definitions and descriptions of some basic terms and expressions used in the study are given below:

International Students: The term international students refers to students from developing countries enrolled in different programs in Fall 1988 at Michigan State University.

Home Countries: They refer to countries to which international students will return after completion of their education and training in U.S.A. for permanent settlement.

Educational Media: This term refers to those media which are used in teaching, learning, and training environments as instructional aids. For example, pictures, films, slides, audio and video tapes, computers, interactive video and the like. It does not include printed books and blackboards which are the basic educational media used in developing countries.

Use of Educational Media: It refers to the perceived practice of educational media in teaching, learning, training, and information processing environments.

Nature of Perception: This term means whether the perception of international students is positive (favorable) or negative (unfavorable).

Levels of Perception: It refers to high, medium, and low levels of respondents' perception.

Levels of Academic Programs: This term refers to undergraduate or graduate status of the respondents enrolled in Fall 1988 at Michigan State University.

Levels of Experience: This term points out to the degree of actual interactions of the respondents with various educational media as teaching, learning, or training tools.

Levels of Information: It refers to the respondents degree of simple knowledge of various educational media, e.g., what are they ? What do they do ? What they are used for ? etc.

Annual Per Capita Income: This expression means the annual per capita income of the people in respondents' home countries as reported in the 1988 Almanac.

M E T H O D O L O G Y

POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The study used a cross-sectional survey method. The population for this study consisted of all international students enrolled in Fall 1989 at Mighigan State University. These international students included students only from developing countries of Asia, Africa, Latin America and Caribbean. A total of 29 countries were represented.

By using random sampling technique, a sample of 350 was drawn for this study. Out of this 350 international students, only 208 returned the completed questionnaires. The rate of return was 62%, which was considered adequate for the data analysis.

DATA COLLECTION

The data were collected through a structured questionnaire with a 5-point Likert scale; which was designed, developed and tested for this study. The questionnaires were mailed to the respondents with cover letters, and two weeks were allowed for the return of the completed questionnaires. Those who did not return the questionnaires within a two-week period, were once more requested through telephone calls to return the completed questionnaires within a week's time. These efforts helped collect 208 completed questionnaires which formed the basis for the data analysis.

DATA ANALYSIS

To analyze the data frequencies, percentages, means and analysis of variance were used. The data were analyzed by the computer using SPSSX.

Means were computed to find the levels of general perception of the respondents, and also to compare the levels of perceptions toward the use of educational media in education, business & industry, and government. To determine the levels of perceptions mean scores were collasped as follows: means over 4 to 5 = high level; means 3 to 4 = medium level; and means below 3 = low level.

Analysis of variance was used to examine the variations in perceptions due to academic programs, experience, information, and annual per capita incomes in respondents' home countries. Scheffe post hoc test was also run to find which of the two parts of a group were significantly different. Academic programs were indicated by undergraduate and graduate, and the levels of experience and information were expressed as high, medium and low based on their respective mean scores. Mean scores were collapsed as follows: Mean scores of 1.25 to 2.99 = low level; 3 to 4 = medium level; and 4.01 to 5 = high level. The high (above $10,000), medium ($1000 to $10,000), and low (below $1000) levels of annual per capita incomes were determined on the basis of annual per capita incomes reported in the 1988 Almanac for respondents' home countries. The questionnaire used a 5-point Likert scale and the weights were assigned as follows: Strongly Agree = 5; Agree = 4; Neutral = 3; Disagree = 2; and Strongly Disagree = 1. For item numbers 6, 7, 18 and 19 weights were reversed.

VARIABLES

For this study, the independent variables were respondents' academic programs, experience, information and annual per capita incomes. The dependent variable was respondents' perceived use of educational media in their home countries.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The findings of the study are presented below:

NATURE AND LEVELS OF PERCEPTIONS

The findings of the study indicate that the general perceptions of the respondents toward the use of educational media was positive in nature and were expressed at a high level ($\bar{x}$=4.09).

The data were further analyzed to see the levels of respondents' perceptions toward the use of educational media in education, business & industry, and government. Respondents indicated a higher level of positive perceptions ($\bar{x}$=4.15) toward the use of educational media in business & industry, followed by government ($\bar{x}$=4.14), and education ($\bar{x}$=4.04). Table 1 contains the data.

Table 1

Rank Order of Perceptions in Relation to Educational Institutions, Business & Industry and Government in terms of Mean Scores

Categories	Rank Order	Number	Mean	SD
Business & Industry	1	208	4.154	.337
Government	2	208	4.146	.339
Educational Institutions	3	208	4.037	.314

Table 2
One-Way Analysis of Variance For General Perceptions in Terms of Selected Independent Variables

Variables	No.	Mean	SD	F Ratio	F Prob.
PROGRAM LEVELS					
Undergraduates	39	4.15	.219	2.707	.101
Graduates	169	4.07	.281		
EXPERIENCE LEVELS					
High	3	3.84	.381	2.068	.129
Medium	48	4.05	.347		
Low	157	4.11	.241		
INFORMATION LEVELS					
High	15	4.01	.356	2.874	.058
Medium	149	4.12	.257		
Low	44	4.02	.279		
PER CAPITA INCOME LEVELS					
High	13	4.26	.151	3.956	.020*
Medium	60	4.12	.303		
Low	135	4.06	.260	Scheffe:High > Low	

* Significant at .050 level.

VARIATIONS IN PERCEPTIONS

A significant difference (F value of 3.96 at .050 significance level) in respondents' general perception was indicated in terms of levels of their annual per capita incomes. Scheffe test showed that respondents with high and low levels of annual per capita incomes differed significantly. However, no significant differences were noticed in terms of levels of academic programs, experience and information. Table 2 presents the data.

Results also indicate that respondents' specific perceptions in relation to education, business & industry, and government differed significantly. Differences were found in respondents' specific perceptions in relation to education by levels of information (F value of 3.86 at .050 significance level), and annual per capita income (F value of 4.50 at .050 significance level); in relation to business & industry by levels of experience (F value of 3.43 at .050 significance level) only; and in relation to government by levels of experience (F value of 4.53 at .050 significance level) and levels of annual per capita income (F value of 3.21 at .050 significance level).

MINOR FINDINGS

Out of 208 respondents, 39 were undergraduates and 169 were graduate students. With regard to levels of experience, only 3 indicated a high level of experience with educational media, 48 respondents reported medium level of experience, whereas 157 respondents stated that they had a low level of experience with educational media.

In respect of levels of information about educational media, 15 respondents said that they had a high level of information about educational media, 149 respondents reported their information level at medium level, and 44 respondents stated they had a low level of information about educational media.

With regard to levels of annual per capita incomes, the results showed that 13 respondents belonged to high level of annual per capita income countries, 60 belonged to medium level, and 135 belonged to low level of annual per capita income countries.

Other minor findings indicate that the respondents were from 29 developing countries. They came from 15 Asian countries, 10 African, and 4 from Latin American and Caribbean countries.

INTERPRETATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The high level of respondents' general perceptions toward the use of educational media shows a favorable perception of international students toward educational media in their home

countries. The reason for this high favorable perception may be due to respondents' experience with and information about educational media. This high level of favorable perceptions of international students can be profitably manipulated in favor of efforts directed toward introducing new educational technology or achieving greater use of educational media in developing countries.

Respondents expressed a higher level of perceived use of media in business & industry, closely followed by government in their home countries. The use of educational media in educational institutions was perceived at a lower level by the respondents. This may be explained, in most cases, by the limited resources available to educational institutions for change and innovations. Business & industry, and government, therefore, seem to be more potential targets for introduction of new educational technology or for expansion of the use of educational media in developing countries.

Respondents from high annual per capita income countries differed significantly in their perceptions from respondents belonging to low annual per capita income countries. This may be due to big difference that exists in the annual per capita incomes of respondents belonging to these two groups of countries. Countries like Kuwait and Saudi Arabia with the annual per capita incomes of $18,180 and $11,500 respectively, have greater capacity to introduce new educational technology or to expand the use of educational media in their schools, business and government than countries like Nepal with an annual per capita income of $ 170, or Ethiopia with $ 110 only. This leads us to conclude that countries with high annual per capita incomes are better targets for introduction of new educational technology, or for expansion of the use of educational media than countries with low annual per capita incomes.

The study is limited in its scope and coverage. It is confined to international students at Michigan State University. As a result, its findings can not be generalized. Also the findings of this study are based on perceptual data. The very nature of perceptions being fluid makes the problem of measurement elusive.

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